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NO. 35  
MARCH

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# THE VAULT OF

# HORROR

FEATURING...



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



# THE VAULT OF HORROR!

NO, NO, NO! AND WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FOR CHRISTMAS? HAVE YOU BEEN A GHOUL LITTLE CHILD? I HOPE SO, FOR WITH THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT ALL ABOUT US, THE EDITORS THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FITTING TO GIVE OUR STORY FOR THIS ISSUE A LITTLE CHRISTMASY FEELING! IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE! AND ALL GODD'LITTLE CHILDREN ARE TUCKED IN THEIR BEDDY-BYES FAST ASLEEP! NO! NO! A PERFECT ATMOSPHERE FOR A CHRISTMAS TALE, EN?

## ...AND ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE...



HER HUSBAND WAS DEAD, AND IT WAS THE BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT SHE'D EVER HAD! SHE STOOD OVER THE LIFELESS BODY SPRAWLED AT HER FEET AND SMILED.



SHE LINGERED... THINKING OF THE MONTHS OF PLANNING THAT HAD CULMINATED IN ONE SWIFT BLOW WITH A POKER. FROM UPSTAIRS SHE HEARD A CHILD'S CRIES...



SHE HURRIED UPSTAIRS, OPENED THE DOOR TO A SMALL BEDROOM



NO, DEAR, NOT YET! IT'S NOT TIME, SO YOU GO BACK TO SLEEP!



I'LL SEE, DEAR! NOW YOU BE A GOOD LITTLE GIRL AND GO RIGHT TO SLEEP, OR SANTA WON'T COME AT ALL! ALL RIGHT?



SHE REMAINED UNTIL HER DAUGHTER WAS SLEEPING AGAIN, THEN RETURNED DOWNSTAIRS. SHE STEPPED OVER HER HUSBAND'S BODY, MOVED TO THE TABLE. CASUALLY, SHE LIT A CIGARETTE AND INHALED...



THERE WAS NO HURRY. SHE HAD PLANNED TOO LONG AND TOO WELL. THERE WERE NO NEIGHBORS WITHIN MILES AND SHE HAD ALL NIGHT TO DISPOSE OF THE BODY. SHE THOUGHT OF THE INSURANCE, DRIFTED ACROSS THE ROOM, AND TURNED ON THE RADIO...



THE MUSIC FLOATED THROUGH THE ROOM *CHRISTMAS CAROLS!* SHE HUMMED SOFTLY, AND LOOKED AGAIN AT THE CORPSE. THE STAINED POKER LAY NEARBY...



SHE PICKED UP THE POKER, FONDLED IT, CLEANED IT, SET IT IN ITS PLACE BY THE FIRE...



SHE TURNED AND GAZED AT THE GAILY DECORATED CHRISTMAS TREE, AND THE PRESENTS BENEATH IT...

TSK, TSK... NOW I'LL NEVER KNOW WHETHER OR NOT JOSEPH WOULD HAVE LIKED THAT TIE I BOUGHT FOR HIM! OH, WELL...



ABRUPTLY, THE MANTEL CLOCK CHIMED THE HOUR. IT WAS TIME...

OH! IT'S ELEVEN! TIME TO GET RID OF JOSEPH! AND CAROL WILL BE ALL RIGHT UNTIL I GET BACK!



SHE CROSSED THE ROOM TO TURN OFF THE RADIO... THEN STOPPED, LISTENING...

... LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WE INTERRUPT THIS PROGRAM TO BRING YOU A SPECIAL NEWS BULLETIN...



...WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED A REPORT FROM THE WORLD-WIDE NEWS BUREAU THAT A *HOMIGIDAL MANIAC* HAS ESCAPED FROM THE STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE! HE HAS *BRUTALLY MURDERED FOUR WOMEN* AND ALL CITIZENS ARE WARNED TO REMAIN OFF THE STREETS! *THIS MAN IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS!* WE REPEAT, *HE IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS!*



...ANOTHER REPORT HAS JUST BEEN HANDED ME... HERE IS A DESCRIPTION OF THE ESCAPED MANIAC! HE IS SIX FEET, THREE INCHES TALL, TWO HUNDRED TEN POUNDS, HAS DARK EYES, SHAGGY BLACK HAIR! IT IS REPORTED THAT HE IS NOW WEARING A *SANTA CLAUS* COSTUME WHICH HE HAD TAKEN FROM A MAN IN THE VILLAGE OF *PLEASANTVILLE!*

PLEASANTVILLE?! MY GOD! THAT'S JUST SOUTH OF HERE!



...HE IS BELIEVED TO BE HEADED NORTH! POLICE OFFICIALS STATE THAT HE WILL NOT HARM CHILDREN, AND WILL ONLY INJURE MEN IF HE IS PROVOKED! IT IS SAID THAT HE IS OBSESSED WITH THE KILLING OF WOMEN! ALL FOUR WOMEN THAT HE ALREADY HAS MURDERED HAD BEEN ATTACKED AND VICIOUSLY DISFIGURED...



ALL WOMEN ARE WARNED TO REMAIN INDOORS! THIS MAN IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS! FURTHER BULLETINS WILL BE BROUGHT TO YOU AS SOON AS THEY ARE RECEIVED, STAY TUNED NOW FOR...



I HADN'T FIGURED ON ANYTHING LIKE THIS! STILL... CAROL WILL BE OKAY IF I LEAVE HER! THE RADIO SAID THAT HE WON'T HARM CHILDREN! AND I HAVE TO GET RID OF JOSEPH!



SHE TIP-TOED TO THE WINDOW AND PEERED THROUGH! IN THE DARKNESS, SHE COULD DISCERN THE RED COSTUME, THE WHITE FUR TRIM...



IN A FIT OF SUDDEN PANIC SHE RUSHED TO THE TELEPHONE AND SNATCHED UP THE RECEIVER TO CALL THE POLICE! SHE STOPPED... AND AN ICY FEAR CLUTCHED HER HEART.



SLOWLY, SHE LOWERED THE RECEIVER. SHE STARED AT THE BODY... AT THE FRONT DOOR... AND THE HOUSE WAS AS QUIET AS DEATH...



MAYBE HE'LL GO AWAY! BUT I'D... I'D BETTER PUT JOSEPH'S BODY IN THE CLOSET! IF CAROL WOKE UP...

THE FRONT DOOR KNOB RATTLED LOUDLY. SHE MOVED AWAY FROM THE CORPSE TO THE DOOR...



HE'S TRYING TO GET IN!  
HE ISN'T GOING TO GO AWAY!  
HE WANTS ME!

IN THE SILENCE SHE HEARD HIM STOMP FROM THE PORCH! FROM WITHIN, SHE FOLLOWED THE SOUND OF HIS FOOTSTEPS CRUNCHING IN THE SNOW...



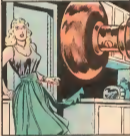
HE... HE'S GOING AROUND THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE!  
HE'S GOING TO THE BACK DOOR!

MADLY, SHE RACED THROUGH THE HOUSE TO THE BACK DOOR! SHE LOCKED AND BOLTED IT NERVOUSLY.



THERE!

SHE HEARD HIS STEPS CLUMPING ONTO THE BACK PORCH, AND SHE STOOD AWAY FROM THE DOOR, FEARFULLY WATCHING THE KNOB AS IT WAS TURNED AND RATTLED...



AGAIN, SHE LISTENED IN TERROR AS THE FOOTSTEPS LEFT THE PORCH AND MOVED THROUGH THE SNOW.



THE WINDOWS! HE'LL TRY THE WINDOWS!

FRANTICALLY, SHE RUSHED FROM WINDOW TO WINDOW, MAKING CERTAIN THEY WERE ALL LOCKED, ALL THE BLINDS LOWERED! THE RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT THUNDERED IN HER MIND. SHE SHUDDERED CONVULSIVELY...



I'VE GOT TO HURRY!  
I'VE GOT TO HURRY!  
ONE OF THEM MAY BE UNLOCKED!

WHILE LOCKING ALL THE WINDOWS SHE NOTICED JOSEPH ON THE FLOOR. A STRANGE EXPRESSION FLICKED ACROSS HER FACE. FOR A MOMENT SHE SEEMED BEWILDERED.

JOSEPH... HEAVENS! I'VE GOT TO GET HIM OUT OF SIGHT! IF CAROL EVER WOKE UP AND CAME DOWN-STAIRS!

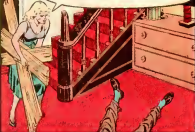


SHE HURRIED DOWN TO THE CELLAR, STUMBLING AND ALMOST FALLING IN THE DIM LIGHT! SHE SWISHED HER HAND ACROSS HER FOREHEAD, WIPED AWAY THE DROPS OF PERSPIRATION.



LOADED WITH HER BURDEN SHE CLUMSILY CLIMBED THE STAIRS AND ENTERED THE LIVING ROOM. SHE SAW THE BODY...

OH... I STILL HAVEN'T PUT HIM AWAY IN THE CLOSET! IF CAROL EVER SAW...



SHE STARTED DRAGGING THE BODY ACROSS THE FLOOR TO THE CLOSET, THEN STOPPED AND LOOKED AT THE FRONT DOOR AND THEN AT THE WINDOWS. SHE DROPPED THE BODY...

THE WINDOWS! I'VE LOCKED ALL THE WINDOWS... BUT HE COULD BREAK THEM! HE'LL COME INSIDE AND KILL ME!



THERE WAS LUMBER IN THE CELLAR. JOSEPH WAS ALWAYS BUYING AND PICKING UP PIECES OF LUMBER AND SILENTLY SHE THANKED HIM! SHE GATHERED AS MANY BOARDS AS SHE COULD, GRABBED A HAMMER AND A HANDFUL OF NAILS...



SHE PUT DOWN THE BOARDS, THE HAMMER, THE NAILS AND NOW, TREMBLING, SHE LIFTED JOSEPH AND BEGAN ONCE MORE TO DRAG HIM TO THE CLOSET...



SHE STOPPED, SUDDENLY REMEMBERING THE BREAKABLE WINDOWS AND THE FIEND SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE! SHE DROPPED THE BODY, PICKED UP THE LUMBER, THE NAILS, THE HAMMER AND STARTED BOARDING THE WINDOWS...



FROM THE REAR OF THE HOUSE SHE HEARD A POUNDING ON THE BACK DOOR AND SHE DROPPED THE HAMMER AND DROPPED THE NAILS AND SNATCHED UP THE PHONE TO CALL FOR HELP AND REMEMBERED THE BODY ON THE FLOOR...



SHE LET THE PHONE SLIP FROM HER GRASP AND TUMBLE INTO ITS CRADLE AND SHE PICKED UP THE HAMMER AND THE LUMBER AND ALL THE LITTLE NAILS AND FINISHED BOARDING UP THE WINDOWS...



SHE FINISHED THE WINDOWS AND WONDERED WHAT THE MANIAC WAS DOING AND REMEMBERED THE DEAD BODY AND WENT BACK AND DRAGGED IT INTO THE CLOSET...



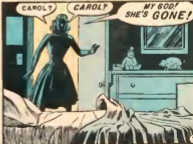
SHE WENT OVER ALL THE WINDOWS AGAIN, CHECKING TO SEE IF THEY WERE ALL BOARDED UP AND MADE SURE THE BODY WAS IN THE CLOSET AND WENT DOWN TO THE CELLAR TO CHECK THE CELLAR DOOR...



THE CELLAR DOOR WAS LOCKED AND SHE RAN UPSTAIRS AND CHECKED THE DOORS AND CHECKED THE WINDOWS AND MADE SURE THE BODY WAS IN THE CLOSET AND RACED UP TO THE ATTIC TO MAKE SURE IT WAS ALL CLOSED UP...



AND AFTER SHE CHECKED THE ATTIC SHE CHECKED THE LOCKS ON ALL THE WINDOWS ON THE SECOND FLOOR AND THOUGHT OF THE FIEND AND ALL THE INSURANCE AND WENT TO HER DAUGHTER'S ROOM...





THE ROOM WAS EMPTY AND SHE TOOK THE BED-CLOTHES FROM THE EMPTY BED AND SLAMMED THE DOOR OF THE EMPTY CLOSET AND CHECKED THE LOCK OF THE EMPTY ROOM'S WINDOW...

IT'S LOCKED! SHE'S STILL HERE! SHE'S STILL IN THE HOUSE!



CAROL! CAROL! WHERE ARE YOU?!

HERE I AM MOMMY! HERE I AM! DOWNSTAIRS!



SHE RUSHED HEAD LONTS FROM THE EMPTY ROOM, CLATTERED FRANTICALLY DOWN THE STAIRS... AND STOPPED...

LOOK, MOMMY! LOOK! SANTA CLAUS IS HERE! I LET HIM IN!!



THE END

HO, HO, HO! AND WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FOR CHRISTMAS? DID YOU ENJOY OUR LITTLE STORY? CAROL'S MOMMY JUST GOT THE BIGGEST SURPRISE OF HER LIFE... YOU SEE, THIS SANTA LOVED TO SLEIGH BELLES! AND NEXT TIME YOU SEE

SANTA, BETTER MAKE SURE HE ISN'T SIX FOOT THREE WITH SHAGGY BLACK HAIR! THAT REMINDS ME... I GUESS IT'S TIME FOR ME TO REMOVE THIS MASK



HEH, HEH! YEP! IT'S ME... THE VAULT KEEPER! YOU DIDN'T THINK WE'D EVER HAVE THE REAL SANTA CLAUS IN THIS HORROR MAG, DID YOU? OH... I SUPPOSE YOU'VE BEEN WONDERING JUST WHAT I'VE GOT IN THIS SACK! HEH! IT'S ONLY WHAT'S LEFT OF CAROL'S

MOMMY AFTER THAT MANIAC WAS THROUGH WITH HER! HEH, HEH, HEH, HEH! AND BY THE WAY, MERRY CHRISTMAS!



# THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! WELL IT'S TIME FOR ME TO BREW MY GOO, AND LET ME TELL YOU RIGHT NOW THAT IT'S A REAL GOOEY BREW I'M BREWING! THIS IS THE OLD WITCH, MISTRESS OF THE HAUNT OF FEAR, READY TO SERVE YOU ANOTHER MORBID MORSEL OF MISERY TO SATISFY YOUR MONSTRIOUS APPETITES FOR EVIL! HERE IT IS, YOU HORROR-HUNGRY HOUNDS, THE STORY OF A LITTLE BOY AND HIS...

## SHOE-BUTTON EYES!



YOU SEE, I WAS BORN *BLIND!* AND THIS IS THE *FIRST* TIME IN MY WHOLE LIFE THAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO SEE! GOSH, EVERYTHING IS SO PRETTY! AND MY MOMMY IS THE *PRETTIEST* OF ALL!



"BUT I ALWAYS *KNEW* SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL EVEN THOUGH I NEVER SAW HER FACE UNTIL TODAY, 'CAUSE SHE WAS ALWAYS SO GOOD TO ME! WHEN I WAS ONLY A BABY SHE USED TO SING TO ME AND PLAY WITH ME TO MAKE ME FORGET HOW HUNGRY I WAS..."



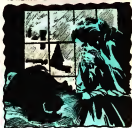
"MY DADDY WAS A GOOD MAN. HE USED TO WORK HARD AN' EVEN THOUGH HE NEVER MADE MUCH MONEY, HE AND MOMMY WERE HAPPY!"



"LIKE I SAY, HE NEVER MADE MUCH MONEY, AND WHEN THERE WASN'T ANY WOOD FOR THE STOVE, THAT'S WHEN MOMMY USED TO CRADLE ME IN HER ARMS TO KEEP ME WARM..."



"I DON'T REMEMBER MY DADDY TOO WELL 'CAUSE HE DIED WHEN I WAS VERY SMALL. BUT I CAN REMEMBER THE SOUND OF MY MOMMY CRYING AT NIGHT AND HOW SHE USED TO TALK TO ME...LIKE I COULD UNDERSTAND..."



"IT WAS RIGHT AFTER MY DADDY DIED THAT MOMMY HAD TO START WORKING. I DIDN'T SEE HER MUCH, BUT WHEN SHE CAME HOME AT NIGHT, SHE'D SIT ME ON HER LAP AND TEACH ME THINGS, AND TALK TO ME AND KISS ME. GEE! SHE USED TO MAKE ME FEEL SO GOOD..."



"MY MOMMY TRIED TO TEACH ME EVERYTHING SHE COULD 'CAUSE I COULDN'T GO TO SCHOOL LIKE OTHER KIDS WHO *COULD* SEE! 'COURSE, SHE COULDN'T AFFORD TO SEND ME TO A *SPECIAL* SCHOOL...SO I DIDN'T HAVE MY FRIENDS AT ALL TO PLAY WITH! BUT I DIDN'T MIND... 'CAUSE I ALWAYS HAD MY *TEDDY BEAR*..."



"I DON'T REMEMBER WHERE MY TEDDY BEAR CAME FROM. SEEMS LIKE I ALWAYS HAD HIM! AND WHEN MY MOMMY WAS AWAY ALL DAY, HE USED TO KEEP ME COMPANY. I USED TO TALK TO HIM ALL THE TIME. TEDDY BEAR WAS THE ONLY FRIEND I EVER HAD..."



"MY MOMMY AND TEDDY BEAR NEVER LAUGHED AT ME 'CAUSE I COULDN'T SEE WHERE I WAS GOING. WHY DID MY NEW DADDY LAUGH AT ME?"



"SEEMS LIKE MY MOMMY WAS ALWAYS UNHAPPY. SOMETIMES MY NEW DADDY WOULDN'T COME HOME ALL NIGHT, AND TEDDY BEAR AND I WOULD LIE AWAKE, LISTENING TO MY MOMMY CRYING IN HER SLEEP. AND WHEN HE DID COME HOME... HE WAS ALMOST ALWAYS DRUNK..."



"GET AWAY FROM ME! I CAN WALK! GET ME SOME FOOD!"

"ALL RIGHT, JED! DON'T BE ANGRY! I'LL HAVE SOMETHING READY IN A MINUTE!"

"AND THEN MY MUMMY GOT MARRIED AGAIN. I DIDN'T LIKE MY NEW DADDY AS MUCH AS MY REAL DADDY AND I DON'T THINK MY MOMMY LIKED HIM, EITHER. SHE NEVER SAID SO RIGHT OUT, BUT I THINK SHE ONLY MARRIED HIM FOR MY SAKE..."



"LO... BILLY... THIS YOUR NEW DADDY? HE'S GOING TO TAKE CARE OF US..."

"LO, DADDY..."

"HA, HA! WHERE YOU GOIN, BOY? I'M OVER HERE!"

"AFTER MY NEW DADDY CAME TO LIVE WITH US, I HAD TO SLEEP ALONE. BUT I HAD TEDDY BEAR TO TALK TO. HE WAS ALWAYS MY FRIEND..."



"MY MOMMY AND I WERE AFRAID OF MY NEW DADDY. HE WAS MEAN TO US... AND HE USED TO MAKE MY MOMMY CRY..."



"MONEY, MONEY, MONEY! THAT'S ALL YOU EVER THINK OF!"

"(SOM) OH, JED, PLEASE! WINTER'S COMING! BILLY NEEDS NEW SHOES! (SOB)"

"HE DIDN'T LIKE ME. HE USED TO ALWAYS MAKE FUN OF ME AND LAUGH AT ME 'CAUSE I WAS BLIND!"



"HA, HA! THAT'S THE SECOND TIME YOU TRIPPED OVER THAT CHAIR! WHY DON'T YOU LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOING, BOY? HA, HA!"

"OH, BILLY! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?"

"LOTS OF TIMES MY NEW DADDY WOULDN'T GIVE MY MOMMY ANY MONEY, AND THAT'S WHEN MY MOMMY HAD TO START WORKING AGAIN. BUT SHE HAD TO WORK TOO HARD... AND I KNEW IT WAS TOO MUCH FOR HER. SHE GOT SICK..."



WILL YA LOOK AT THAT! BOY, YOU GOT THE FUNNIEST LOOKING EYES I EVER SAW! WHY, HANGED IF THEY DON'T LOOK JUST LIKE YOUR TEDDY BEAR'S SHOE-BUTTON EYES! HA! WELL, IF THAT DON'T BEAT ALL!

SNIFF!



"I COULDN'T HELP IT IF I HAD FUNNY LOOKING EYES, COULD I? IT WASN'T MY FAULT, WAS IT? IT WASN'T MY FAULT..."

GEE, TEDDY BEAR... YOU AND MOMMY ARE THE ONLY FRIENDS I HAVE. I... I WISH I COULD SEE! THEN... (SNIFF) THEN MAYBE HE WOULDN'T MAKE FUN OF ME.



...IT ISN'T RIGHT, IS IT, TEDDY BEAR? IT ISN'T RIGHT THAT SOMEONE GOOD LIKE MY MOMMY SHOULD ALWAYS CRY! (SNIFF) AND... AND...



"I REMEMBER ONE NIGHT WHEN IT WAS ALMOST CHRISTMAS MY MOMMY WAS REAL SICK AND MY NEW DADDY HADN'T BEEN HOME FOR A FEW DAYS, SO THERE WASN'T ANY MONEY IN THE HOUSE. MY MOMMY WAS AWFUL SICK. I WAS IN BED WITH TEDDY BEAR TRYING TO KEEP WARM, WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN THE DOOR BURST OPEN..."

WELL?? WHERSH EVER'BODY?! I'M HUNGRY AND I...





"HE STARTED TO YELL AT MY MOMMY! I HEARD HIM! HE STARTED TO YELL AND MAKE HER CRY! HE SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT! MOMMY WAS SICK! AND THEN I GOT MAD AND JUMPED OUT OF BED..."



"I RAN OUT OF MY ROOM, YELLING AND CRYING AT THE SAME TIME... WELL, IF IT ISN'T LITTLE SHOE-BUTTON EYES!



"I WANTED TO HIT HIM! I WAS SO MAD, I WANTED TO HURT HIM A LOT! BUT I COULDN'T SEE WHERE I WAS GOING AND I TRIPPED OVER A CHAIR OR SOMETHING..."



I HEARD MY NEW DADDY SLAM THE DOOR AS HE WENT AWAY... AND THEN IT WAS QUIET. MY MOMMY JUST HELD ME IN HER ARMS THERE ON THE FLOOR, AND FOR A LONG TIME SHE JUST CRIED AND KINDA ROCKED BACK AND FORTH...

(SNIFF) GEE, MOMMY... HE DIDN'T HAVE TO HURT TEDDY BEAR, DID HE? IT'S ALL RIGHT IF HE HURTS ME, BUT NOT MY TEDDY BEAR...

OH, MY BABY... MY BABY... (SOB!)



I WISH TEDDY BEAR HAD HIS EYES BACK, MOMMY! TEDDY BEAR *NEEDS* HIS EYES! I'M... I'M USED TO NOT HAVING EYES, MOMMY! DO YOU THINK... MOMMY! DO YOU THINK *MAYBE* SANTA CLAUS...?

I DON'T KNOW, SON! I DON'T KNOW. (COUGH!)



SANTA CLAUS NEVER BROUGHT ME ANYTHING *BEFORE*, MOMMY! DO YOU THINK *MAYBE* JUST THIS *ONCE* HE'D GIVE TEDDY BEAR BACK HIS EYES? *JUST THIS ONCE*, MOMMY?

(SOB)

(SOB)



"I DIDN'T KNOW THIS AT THE TIME, BUT THE NEXT DAY, MY MOMMY TOOK THE MONEY SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO BUY MEDICINE WITH AND WENT OUT..."



"IT WAS AN AWFUL COLD DAY! I HAD TO STAY IN BED WITH MY CLOTHES ON TO KEEP WARM, AND MY MOMMY, SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE OUT IN THAT WEATHER. SHE WAS *REAL SICK*..."

I'LL... (COUGH) I'LL TAKE THIS PAIR, PLEASE! (COUGH)



I HEARD HER COME BACK, AND AFTER WE TALKED FOR A LITTLE WHILE SHE MADE ME GET BACK IN BED SO I WOULDN'T CATCH COLD. I LISTENED TO HER MOVING AROUND THE KITCHEN. SHE WAS BREATHING KINDA FUNNY AND IT SEEMS SHE WAS COUGHING AN AWFUL LOT! I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE WAS DOING, THOUGH.



"I GUESS I FELL ASLEEP! I DON'T KNOW JUST WHEN IT WAS, BUT I FELT SANTA CLAUS LIFT MY ARM AND PUT MY TEDDY BEAR BESIDE ME. I WAS HALF ASLEEP BUT I REMEMBER TOUCHING HIS FACE AND FEELING HIS *EYES*. AND I KNEW THEY WERE *BRIGHT* AND *REAL PRETTY*..."



"THE NEXT THING I KNEW, I HEARD MY NEW DADDY YELLING. I GOT OUT OF BED. HE WAS YELLING AT MY MOMMY TO GET OUT OF BED... BUT SHE DIDN'T MOVE... SHE DIDN'T MOVE AT ALL..."

"...NO GOOD TRAMP! GET OUTTA THAT BED. YOU HEAR?!"



"I LISTENED FOR MY MOMMY... AND I KNEW SHE WASN'T GOING TO GET UP. I KNEW SHE WASN'T EVER GOING TO GET UP AGAIN..."

"GET UP! I SAY! GET UP!"



"(SNIFF) MOMMY, PLEASE WAKE UP... (SNIFF)"

"SHOE-BUTTON EYES!"



"I DON'T KNOW WHY HE HIT ME. I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING! I REMEMBER HITTING MY HEAD AGAINST SOMETHING SHARP... AND THAT'S ALL..."



"BUT BEFORE CHRISTMAS MORNING, THERE WERE SOME AWFUL SCREAMS AND YELLS THAT CAME FROM OUR HOUSE. THE NOISE WOKE THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD..."



"... AND WHEN THEY BROKE THE DOOR DOWN, THEY SAW MY NEW DADDY LYING ON THE FLOOR. HE WAS DEAD AND HE WAS ALL RIPPED AND BLOODY LIKE SOME ANIMAL HAD GOT HIM. HIS EYES WERE TORN OUT... AND IN THEIR PLACE WERE THE NEW SHOE BUTTON EYES... ALL BRIGHT AND SHINY. THEY FOUND MY TEDDY BEAR IN A CORNER... WITHOUT HIS EYES, ALL COVERED WITH BLOOD... AND... AND HE WAS SMILING..."



"AND THAT'S WHY THIS IS THE BEST CHRISTMAS I'VE EVER HAD! I CAN SEE! I CAN SEE! I CAN SEE EVERYTHING FROM WAY UP HERE! AND EVERYTHING'S SO PRETTY!"



"IF ANY OF YOU FOUL FIENDS THINK I'M GETTING MUSHY IN MY OLD AGE, YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO GRIN AND BEAR IT (TEDDY, THAT IS), 'CAUSE I'M ALL CHOKED UP WITH THE YULETIDE SPIRIT! SO UNTIL NEXT TIME... MERRY XMAS!"



THE END...